

MARGARET GIBSON. Poet Laureate CONNECTICUT, APRIL, 2019-APRIL 2022.

GRANT FROM ACADEMY OF AMERICAN POETS TO POET LAUREATES. GRANT YEAR 2001.

WHAT FOLLOWS IS A COPY OF MY REPORT TO ACADEMY OF AMERICAN POETS FOR ACTIVITIES AND EXPENDITURES

What was/were your civic project/s? * *(Please check all that apply.)*

- Exhibition or public art project
- Online project (e.g. website)
- **Festival** (virtual and/or in-person). **Virtual Earth Day Festival**, April 24, 2021, featuring 2 poetry readings (8 poets each reading), a talk by Margaret Gibson, “Poetry and Ecology,” an environmental poetry workshop by Edwina Trentham, and a presentation of a video entitled “Poets Out in the Open,” featuring Margaret Gibson and David Leff reading poems on the grounds at White Memorial Conservation Center.

- Publication: **WAKING UP TO THE EARTH: CONNECTICUT POETS IN A TIME OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CRISIS.** Grayson Books, 2021. Editor, Margaret Gibson. Poetic Advisors: Marilyn Nelson, Bessy Reyna. First readers David Leff, Rhonda Ward. Call to submit poems sent out widely in Connecticut, 63 poets selected, over 1500 poems submitted. 300 copies sold to date, and selling.

- Readings, whether virtual or in person.
1) Readings for WAKING UP TO THE EARTH: Connecticut poets in a Time of Global Climate Crisis. 2) Poetry readings as Poet Laureate from my work, focus on environmental poems.

Readings in 2020:

--Rockville/Vernon Public Library, a zoom reading recorded later to video and posted on website.

--Torrington Historical Society, live reading in the garden, August, 2020.

--Art Escape: poetry workshop with adults, zoom.

Readings in 2021:

April 11, Stonington Free Library, 5 p.m. Margaret Gibson reading with selected poets in the anthology, Christie Max Williams, Mary Guitar, Clare Rossini, Susan Kinsolving, Jose Gonzalez, Dan Donaghy, Edwina Trentham, Jeanne Le Vasseur. Zoom.

April 13: Riverwood: Reading by selected poets in **Waking Up to the Earth**: Robert Cording, Carol Chaput, Pegi Deitz Shea, Jon Andersen, Jim Finnegan, Lusia and Aaron Caycedo-Kimura, Michael “Chief” Patterson, Julia Paul, Joan Hofmann, Pat Hale, D. Gilbert. Zoom.

April 23: **Waking Up to the Earth** as a source of the poems used in Connectikids Workshop, with Timothy Brown of the Hartford Symphony. Zoom.

April 30: Arts Escape 12 noon. Poetry workshop using **Waking Up to the Earth**. Zoom.

May 6, Norfolk Library, 5:30 p.m. Poetry reading with Ginny Connors, Rennie McQuilkin, Susanna Lawrence, Davyne Verstandig, Frederick Douglass Knowles, Ben Grossberg, Jose Gonzalez, Sarah P. Strong, Margaret Gibson. Zoom.

May 15: LIVE Reading, New Canaan Land Trust, 11 p.m. Still Pond Preserve with selected poets from **Waking Up to the Earth**, Mary Guitar, Pat O’Brien, Ginny Connors.

May 23: Green Poetry Café reading, open mic and poetry contest sponsored by Town Poet Laureate Benjamin Grossberg in Westmoor Park, Hartford CT. Live.

Mystic Arts Café: a Green Poetry Café, this established series of poetry readings (over 25 years) held 2 poetry readings that were environmentally themed. A poetry reading at Mystic Art Museum in October, 2020, featuring Connecticut poets and town laureates, and a second program, June 20, 2021, following the publication of **Waking Up to the Earth**, also at the Mystic Art Museum. Both readings live.

Readings by Margaret Gibson (solo and with others)

April 15, 7:00 p.m. Wintonbury Library, Bloomfield. Zoom.

April 18, 3-5 p.m. LIVE: Poetry Rocks, Vernon, Henry Park Pavilion, with Pegi Deitz Shea and David Leff. Live.

April 20, 7:30p.m. Coastal Lecture Series, UCONN-Avery Point Campus, “Rousing the Ecological Imagination.” Reading with Canton Town Poet Laureate David Leff. Zoom

April 22, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Gunn Library, Washington CT. With Davyne Verstandig. Zoom

April 27, 2:00 p.m. Avon Library. Solo, zoom.

- - Residency program
 - School visits (virtual and in-person)
 - Workshop or workshop series: 1) **Two workshops** for Art Escape (adults). 2) A **Green workshop**, Arts Café Mystic, for poet laureates of area high schools. Workshop poet Rhonda Ward gave the workshop. Green Poetry Workshop funded by grant.
 - Youth Poet Laureate program or other youth mentoring program: **Connectikids Workshop** with Timothy Brown of Hartford Symphony. An outreach after-school program that focused on making masks and musical movement, with an environmental theme, and using poems from **WAKING UP TO THE EARTH**.
 - Other
- 1) **Two videos. POETS OUT IN THE OPEN**, Links attached. Because of the environmental focus of my Poet Laureateship and because Covid prevented my earlier plan of hosting live readings in Green Poetry Cafes, we focused on making videos, using the talents of David Bibbey, Town Poet Laureate of Waterbury and videographer (Connecticut Means Business). We produced **two videos** entitled, respectively, “Poets Out in the Open, Avalonia Land Conservancy” with poets Margaret Gibson, David Leff, and Lana Orphanides; and “Poets Out in the Open: White Memorial Conservation Center” with poets Margaret Gibson and David Leff
- 2) **“Poetry for a Greener World: Celebrating Earth Day.” A video of the Earth Day Festival described above, an all day virtual event on April 24, 2021, at White Memorial Conservation Center.**
- 3) **A video produced by Daniel Donaghy, Poet Laureate of Windham, selected Connecticut Poets reading their poems as a virtual “Green Poetry Café.”**

Is the status of your project(s) complete or nearly complete? If your project is nearly complete, please enter the anticipated date of completion. *. COMPLETED

Please share attendance numbers of poetry readings and workshops: * **Four Workshops**, total attendance 110. **Fifteen poetry readings**, attendance 745. **One festival**, over 100 on zoom. **One School program, Connectikids, 20**. I have no idea how many people have viewed the videos, which are online. We will continue to publicize the videos, sell the anthologies, and send a copy of the anthology to Governor Ned Lamont and to the Commissioner of DEEP.

Briefly describe how you allocated your fellowship funds for your civic project(s): *

Publication of Anthology: **\$3,672** to Grayson Books and artist Jon Friedman for cover.

Readings (both zoom and live): **\$7,100**.

Workshop: **\$1000.**

Videography: David Bibbey: **\$4,785.75**; Green Poetry Café video (Donaghy) **\$1000.**

Total Expenditure: \$16,557.75.

Link(s) to your civic project(s): PROVIDE LINKS TO VIDEOS AND PROGRAMS: I am sending these separately

Did you need to adapt/revise your proposed civic project? If so, how? *

I had planned to organize a series of Green Poetry Cafes, each of which would offer at least 2 “green” or environmentally focused readings, live. Because of the pandemic, I moved to filming poets out in the open on land preserves, supporting videos made by others and readings on zoom.

What community partnerships did you establish as part of your civic project? *. Greater awareness of environmental poetry at libraries and local reading venues. Greater presence at established workshop venues.

Additional notes about your civic project(s):

How has this fellowship changed your perception towards the role of poetry in your community?
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Yes. The comment I have heard from other poets most frequently is their gratitude that as Poet Laureate I have used the position to build a poetry community, one that is cooperative rather than competitive, both supportive and interconnected. I have learned skills of program building and have learned to work with others more efficiently. Poetry can be a solitary enterprise; writing the poetry certainly is. But getting the poems to a wider audience requires cooperation and mutual trust among poets and citizens. I think that without the grant from the Academy of American Poets, I would have not been able to touch as many lives with poetry, to open as many hearts, to educate as many minds (of all ages). As a result of my experience, I plan to write to the Governor of Connecticut to create a program stipend for the Poet Laureate position in the future. Otherwise, the poet may be personally enriched, but not the communities of the state.

How has this fellowship impacted your creative life? Please share links to any books and/or poems published or forthcoming. *. Coming in August, 2021 my thirteenth book of poems, **THE GLASS GLOBE**. (catalog copy attached). Publication of **Waking Up to the Earth: Connecticut Poets in a Time of Global Crisis** which as editor I assembled and for which I wrote an introduction. Publication of “Listening to the Wood Thrush: Notes Toward the Greening of Poetry” in *The Georgia Review*, Fall, 202. An essay. Another book of poems nearly completed, working title: **OLD LOVE**.

Is there anything else that you'd like the Academy to know? *.

I would like the Academy to know how profoundly grateful I am to its generosity and support. It's a gratitude that matches my love of trees and rivers and the capacity of the heart to open to others. Thank you.

A SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES SINCE THE GRANT YEAR:

ONLY HIGHLIGHTS:

PUBLICATION BY LSU PRESS OF MY 13TH BOOK, THE GLASS GLOBE.

**Upcoming Readings for *The Glass Globe* by Margaret Gibson and for *Waking Up to the Earth*, Edited by Margaret Gibson
Fall, 2021.**

SEPTEMBER:

Sunday, September 12, 3-7:15. Poetry Festival at The Hillstead Museum, Farmington, CT. Live and outdoors.

The first reading from *THE GLASS GLOBE*, at 6:00, part of a celebration of the publication of ***The Glass Globe***, and also of the anthology ***Waking Up to the Earth: Connecticut Poets in a Time of Global Climate Crisis***, Edited by Margaret Gibson. Also: a green poetry workshop (David Leff) in the morning and paired afternoon readings from the anthology by, Robert Cording & Elaine Zimmerman, Jon Andersen & Marilyn Nelson, Jim Finnegan & Clare Rossini, Sarah P. Strong & Susan Kinsolving. Margaret Gibson, moderator.

Sunday, September 19, 2 pm, Lyman Allyn Museum, New London, CT. Zoom Poetry reading and discussion from *Waking Up to the Earth: Connecticut Poets in a Time of Global Climate Crisis*.

Margaret Gibson, Jon Andersen, Dolores Hayden and Jose Gonzalez. The poetry and related environmental discussion is offered in connection with the exhibit of sculpture by Ana Flores, "Forest Dreaming."

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**Sunday, September 26 at 4 p.m. Arts Café Mystic at the Mystic Museum of Art.
Margaret Gibson reading from *THE GLASS GLOBE*. Live and outdoors.**

September 28, Keeler Tavern Gardens, 152 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT. 6:30 p.m.

Margaret Gibson reading from *The Glass Globe*. Sponsored by Barb Jennes, Ridgefield Town Poet Laureate. Location Keeler Tavern Gardens, 132 Main Street, Ridgefield. Rain location: Ridgefield Guild of Artists, 34 Halpin Lane, Ridgefield, CT.

OCTOBER:

Saturday, October 2, 12 noon at Haystack Book Festival, Norfolk Library, Norfolk, CT.

Discussion between Margaret Gibson and Fenton Johnson. This discussion focuses on The trilogy *Broken Cup*, *Not Hearing the Wood Thrush*, and *The Glass Globe* AND on Fenton Johnson's prose book *Solitude and the Creative Life*. It's part of a program that runs all weekend. This program requires proof of vaccination and wearing of masks. Every precaution is being taken by the sponsors.

October 10, Haddam Meadows State Park, Poetry Festival. 2:00 p.m. Live and outdoors. The park is located at 816 Saybrook Road, (Rt 154) Haddam, CT.

Margaret Gibson reading from *The Glass Globe*. This event also celebrates **Waking Up to the Earth** with readings by Lorraine Reiss, Lana Orphanides, Mary Guitar, Gwen Gunn, Pat O'Brien, and Edwina Trentham.

Tuesday, October 19, 5 p.m. at Savoy Bookstore, Westerly, Rhode Island. Margaret Gibson, reading from *The Glass Globe*.

October 23: Latina Poets at the Park Street Branch of the Hartford Public Library, featuring Bessy Reyna, Diane Aldrete, Luisa Caycedo-Kimura, and Marianela Medrano. In celebration also of the opening of the Park Street Branch. 11 a.m. Sponsored by the library and the CT Office of the Arts and Poet Laureate Margaret Gibson.

NOVEMBER:

Sunday, November 14, 5 p.m. Stonington Free Library

WHAT FOLLOWS IS A SUMMARY OF PROGRAMS I ORGANIZED OR FUNDED OR SPONSORED OR WAS INVITED TO IN 2022:

EARTH DAY PROGRAM AT REAL ART WAYS: POETS FOR A GREENER WORLD, APRIL 22, 2022.
A program of film, readings, videos of CT poets reading in Land Conservancies, a panel on the

teaching of poetry about climate change, a panel on on Science and Poetry, readings by poets associated with Riverwood, and readings by Marilyn Nelson, David Leff, Daniel Donaghy, Frederick Douglass Knowles, Benjamin Grossberg, and a final reading and conversation with MARGARET GIBSON.

THE POWER OR THE WORD, CELEBRATING BLACK POETS IN CONNECTICUT, AT LYMAN ALLYN MUSEUM, FEATURING MARILYN NELSON, ANTOINETTE BRIM-BELL, RHONDA WARD, KATE RUSHIN, APRIL 9. ALSO WITH POETRY WORKSHOPS BY FREDERICK DOUGLASS KNOWLES AND JOSH BROWN. Sponsored and funded in part by Margaret Gibson, Poet Laureate and by Lyman Allyn Museum.

POETRY READINGS BY MARGARET GIBSON in April 2022:

Acton Library April 11

St. Joseph's University, April 20

Poets for a Greener World (see above)

Putnam Library

UConn Waterbury (OLLI program)

Julia de Burgos Park, May 23,

Hamden Meadows, May 26,

Ridgefield reading, invitation Barb Jennes

Guilford Library, at invitation Guilford Poets Guild